

SABBATICAL VERSES

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649337842

Sabbatical verses by Joseph John Gurney

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
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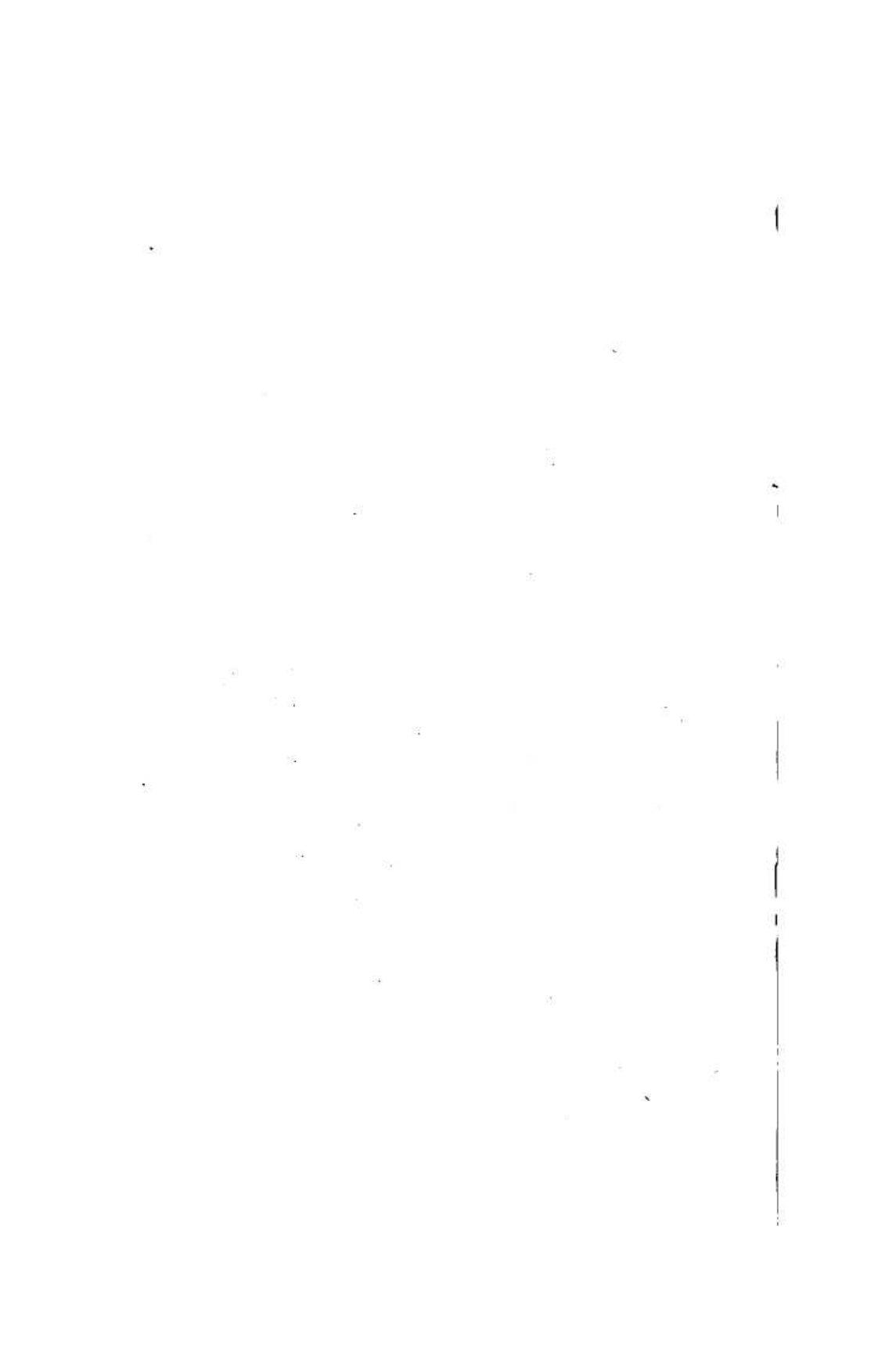
JOSEPH JOHN GURNEY

**SABBATICAL
VERSES**

ADVERTISEMENT.

The following essays in verse have been composed during a period of much affliction, and have helped to soothe some of my solitary hours of sorrow. In the prospect of leaving my native land, in order to pay a visit, in the capacity of a minister of the gospel, to some parts of America, I venture to present them to the christian public of this country, as a farewell token of affectionate respect and regard.

London, 5th month, 24th, 1837.



THE GLORY OF CHRIST

ix

The first Creation.

"By whom also he made the worlds:" Heb. i, 2.

BLEST be thy name, thou uncreated Word,
With God before all worlds, thyself the Lord,
By whom all nature into being sprang,
While heaven applauded and the angels sang.
Bright stars of morning hailed thee in their lays,
The sons of God proclaimed their Master's praise,
Themselves once fashioned by thy plastic hand,
To thee they live, they move at thy command.

B

Well might they joy, when the celestial dove
O'er shoreless oceans waved her wing of love,
Gently incumbent, and through realms of night
Ancient and wild, was poured the new-born light.
Bright efflux from the unfathomed source of day,
And of the eternal co-eternal ray,
Thine was the glory of that hallowed hour ;
From God, from thee, its radiance ; thine the power
That bade the seas recede, the land arise,
Opened the fountains, spread the watery skies,
Gave to the air its substance and extent,
Built and adorned the azure firmament.

Another day is come ; earth claims her bowers,
Her vest of verdure, and her wreath of flowers.
Sprung from no seed the budding wonders grow,
The pines wave freely o'er the mountain's brow,
Perfect at once the oaks dispense their shade,
At once the lily and the rose array'd
In all their beauty shine ; the primrose pale,
Jasmine and hyacinth, perfume the vale ;

Cassia and myrrh their wasted odours pour,
The purpling vines each rifted rock explore ;
A thousand fruits with early blush appear,
The promise of that bright primeval year.
Their seeds are in them ; sweets untasted now
To men, in every age, shall bend the bough.

Again the evening came, the morn was given,
Especial boons devolved on earth from heaven ;
For ere that destined day, the glorious sun
Was not, or hid from earth his course had run ;
No silver horn or perfect orb serene,
No wandering gems, in heaven's dark vault were seen :
But now the vast arrangement fitly made,
The morn shall rise, the eve bestow her shade,
Months, seasons, years, proceed by natural cause,
While heaven's bright signs obey His changeless laws,
Who made them all ; henceforth the greater light,
Shall blaze by day ; the lesser rule the night.
Thus didst Thou build and thus adorn a home
For sentient creatures, countless tribes that roam

O'er earth's wide surface, all alike by Thee
Endued with life's mysterious energy,
And conscious joy.—Some animate the seas,
Now dive below, now leap to inhale the breeze,
Armed with their silvery scales, retreat, advance,
Crop the soft weed, and urge the mazy dance;
While the smooth whales, disporting, lash the deep,
And bid her fountains boil, or calmly sleep
Like islands on her breast.—Some poised in air
Flap the light wing and distant flight prepare,
Or mount aloft, and to the sun unfold
Their feathered pride of purple, green, and gold;
Or less adorned for sight, a social throng,
Charm the glad ear, and fill the groves with song.
Some track a humbler path and move unseen
In earth's dark soils, or hid in thickets green,
Their fleshy ringlets formed for easy play,
Contracting and dilating, wind their way.
With arching neck, fork'd tongue, and eye of flame,
Some slowly glide, or coil their circling frame.

Some frolic wild, and bound along the plain,
Or leap the rocks their wintry peak to gain ;
Or on high bough the grateful kernel find,
Impetuous spring, and chatter to the wind,
Or couch and ruminatè on all the glade,
Or haunt the den, and penetrate the shade :
Or to the pine-top lift a graceful form,
Or rove the wilderness, and breathe the storm.

Slow moves Behemoth o'er the trembling ground ;
Of massive bars his framework, girt around
With sinewy folds prodigious ; easy toil !
With share of ivory he ploughs the soil,
Uproots his bulbous feast, intent to ply
The lithe proboscis—while his lucid eye
Beams with intelligencè. The age must come
When Asia's potentates and conquering Rome,
Shall yoke his sons to the triumphal car,
Train them to arts of peace, to strife of war ;
O'er the broad living flank, uprear the tower,
And safely from its height their javelins shower,